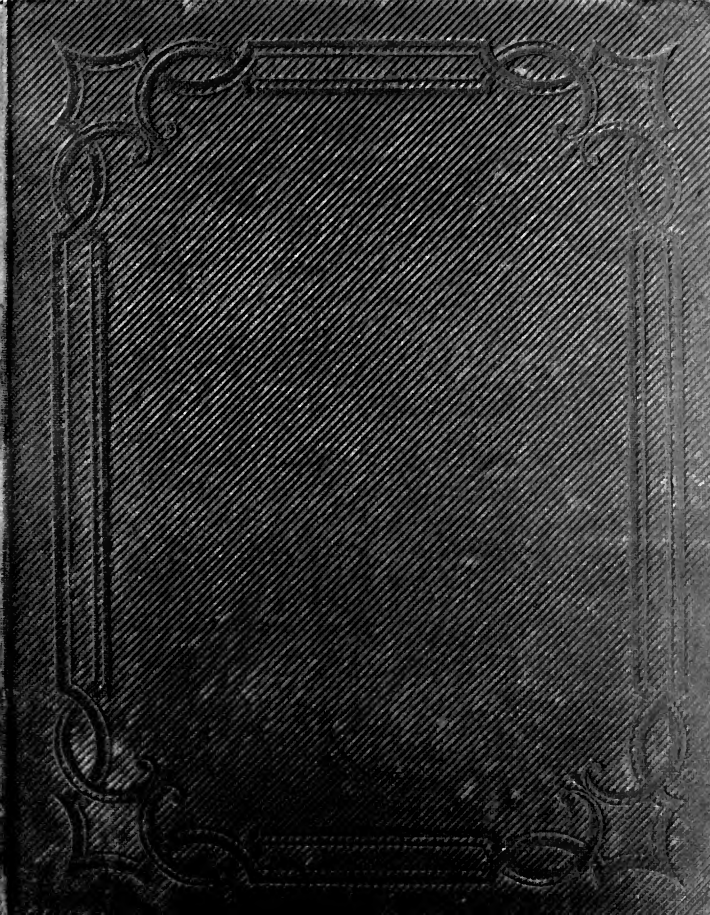




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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Page 23

" There lay poor Cherry, dead . "

THE
BIRD-BOOK.



PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
No 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

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P R E F A C E .

Who can be found, in the wide world, that has never felt any interest in birds? or that has never listened for a moment to their songs, nor watched their graceful movements, nor admired their beautiful form and plumage? Alas! that any should be found who, for mere amusement, can silence their soft and joyous notes, mangle their curious frames, or rob and destroy their inimitable dwellings.

To study the instincts and habits of birds,

is to become acquainted with some of the most wonderful works of creation, and to open to the mind an inexhaustible source of instruction and entertainment.

The following collection embraces several pieces, which have been selected with care from some of the most approved sources, and others which have been prepared expressly for this volume.

The intermingling of prose and poetry gives an agreeable variety, and the design of the whole is to make our young readers students and lovers of the bird-creation.

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THE PET BIRD.

“OH, mother, may I have a bird, and a cage,” said Lucy, as she hastened into the house after school one day. “Do say ‘yes,’ dear mother; for Amelia Turner has got two, and she says I may have one of them. They are Canary birds, and have beautiful yellow feathers, and they sing so very sweetly. I will be a very good girl if you will let me have it, and it will learn to know me.”

“Why, my dear,” said her mother, “would you wish to keep a little bird that was made to be free, and to fly so joyously through the air, or sing so blithely among the branches,—

would you wish to keep such a little free creature a prisoner, in a cage, all its life ?”

“ Oh but, mother,” said Lucy eagerly, “ this one that Amelia is willing to give me, was hatched in the cage, and it has never known any other home ; and she says it will not be unhappy.”

“ But, my daughter,” said Mrs. Lane, “ it has a natural desire for liberty ; and of what use are its wings in a cage, where it can only hop from perch to perch. The fact that birds are always in motion in their little prisons, shows how much they desire to roam at large. Those poor little creatures which are kept as pets, are not often long-lived ; and many a little girl has shed tears, on finding her little favourite lying on its back dead in the cage.”

“I will tell you a story about some birds, which will show you how little they like confinement.

“A gentleman once gave a friend of mine, two birds. She could not bear the thought of confining them in a cage, so she let them fly at large in a room where there were a great many plants. There were perches fixed across the windows, and they could fly from one to another, or hop among the branches of the plants, and they seemed quite happy. This was during the winter. But by and by the snow was gone, and the pleasant warm sunshine clothed the naked trees with verdure. One fine morning my friend said, “I am going to open the window, and see if the birds wish to go. I really believe,” said she, “they have been so long here, and they seem to know

me so well, that they will prefer to remain."

"The window was accordingly opened, and for a long time they sat on their perches, or passed and repassed from window to window, not seeming to wish to avail themselves of the opportunity for regaining their liberty: but the truth was, they did not perceive that the way was really opened for them to go. They had so often attempted it, and found the glass a barrier, that they had long ago ceased to make any effort to pass it; but presently as the wild wind blew on them, and the branches of the fresh green trees waved in the wind, they seemed to feel that they might fly in the open air once more, and suddenly off flew one, and the other immediately followed. They alighted upon a fruit tree in

full bloom near the house, and though their mistress stood at the window with a cup of seed, and called them ; (a call they had been ever ready to obey while in confinement,) she could not attract them. No, so far from it, they stretched their little wings, and were soon out of sight never to return.

“I can repeat a dialogue in verse between little Mary and her bird, which may amuse you.

LITTLE MARY TO HER BIRD.

My dear little Dicky, now tell me, I pray,
Why you are so sad and so silent to-day ?
Not a note, not a chirrup, the whole morning long ;
Come, leave off this sulking, and give me a song.
You will not ! Then you are a sad naughty bird ;
And do not deserve, sir, another kind word.
You ought to be happy, dear Dick, as a king,

With nothing to do but to eat, drink, and sing,
In that gilded cage, hung with chickweed and may,
Like a beautiful palace and garden so gay.
Perhaps you're not happy, perhaps you're not well:
I wish you could speak, that your griefs you might tell;
It vexes me quite thus to see you in sorrow;
Good bye; and I hope you'll be better to-morrow.

THE BIRD'S REPLY TO LITTLE MARY.

Ah! do not reproach me, dear mistress, I pray,
Nor think me ungrateful because I'm not gay;
I know you are kind to your poor little bird,
And it grieves him to hear you say one angry word.
But ah! little lady, when sober I seem,
There is cause for my grief of which you do not dream;
I have a dear mother who mourns for my lot,
For she does not know the kind mistress I've got;
And five little brothers were taken with me,
From our nest at the top of the tall apple tree.
Poor fellows! I heard them all piteously cry;

I wonder if they are as happy as I.
Then think not, dear mistress, I mean to complain;
Though I cannot help wishing to see them again.
I love my fine house, and my nice garden too,
And, sweet little lady, I dearly love you;
Yet, sometimes amidst all my splendour, I find
My heart still clings fondly to friends left behind.

“The Bible says a great deal about birds, and the care God takes of them. He made the birds to fly, and to sing in the groves. David says in the 104th Psalm, speaking of streams of water,—“By them shall the fowls of heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches;” and in the 148th Psalm, when all things are exhorted to praise the Lord, “flying fowl,” or as they are called in the margin “birds of wing,” are included. God takes care of them. He is said to “feed

the ravens, and to hear the young ravens when they cry;" Job xxxviii. 41; Psalm cxlvii. 9. "Behold," says Jesus Christ, in his sermon on the mount, "the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them." Matt. vi. 26. He also says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not *one* of them is forgotten before God;" meaning, as a writer says, that God takes care of sparrows, the least valuable of birds, so that he guides and directs their fall; they fall only with *His* permission, and when *He* chooses; for Jesus Christ says, "One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Matt. x. 29: Luke xii. 6.

"Well, mother," said Lucy, "I should think the boys who shoot the little birds just

for amusement, would think of these words every time they see a wounded bird fall fluttering to the ground."

"So should I, my dear," said her mother. "I was thinking lately when I saw some boys going out with their guns, what an act of wickedness it would have seemed to have destroyed one of those ravens who were the commissioned messengers of God, to feed the prophet Elijah; for it is said that "the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." 1 Kings xvii. 10. It has always seemed to me to be in some sense a breach of the command, "Thou shalt not kill," to take the life of even one animal which is neither injurious to us when living, or useful to us for food when dead. The *life* of every creature is given by God,

and it seems a strange use of words to say, it is taken for amusement, or sport ; for not even a sparrow is forgotten by God.

“I remember once seeing a nest with three young birds in it, dead. I presume the mother-bird was wantonly killed while seeking food for her young. If so, God not only noticed it and saw it fall to the ground, but heard those young ones when they cried for food. The boy that killed that bird thought it fine sport ; and so I suppose did the lad I saw the other day carrying a gun in one hand, and in the other a dead blue-bird. Oh, it made my heart ache to think how many, many miles its little wings had borne it, and that when after its weary flight it had returned, the harbinger of spring, and found once more a rest for the sole of its foot ; and com-

menced its sweet song again in the groves where it had before built its nest, it should meet with so cruel a fate; but it fell not to the ground without the knowledge and notice of God. No, He who decked it in beautiful plumage, and gave it such notes of melody, and who taught it to fly to the sunny south when winter drew near, also taught it to return to its former house, when he had withdrawn his cold and frost. He who had remembered it and fed it, saw it fall to the ground. It was not *forgotten*. Although he permitted its fall, it was not the less a wanton and wicked act to take its life.

“But think you, Lucy, even such an act more cruel than to shut it up in a cage for months or years, where it may be neglected, and even starve to death? or what is quite as

bad, have food given it which is not its proper diet. This was the case with a little bird I had, when I was a child.

“An uncle of mine who was in a very delicate state of health, went to Florida to spend the winter; and when he returned in the spring, he brought me a present of a pair of beautiful birds, such as are seen only in a southern climate. They were in a large cage, and a bag of seed such as they were accustomed to eat, was brought with them. The male bird had beautiful crimson plumage, except the the long feathers of his wings which were black. He had a fine crest of feathers on his head, and I named him Cherry. The female was not of so brilliant a colour, nor so large as the male bird, but she was very pretty, and her I called Ruby. I became much attached

to them, and used to feed them, and watch them a great deal, for they afforded me much amusement. Cherry could sing very sweetly ; but Ruby could only make a little faint chirp, and she used to seem very angry when Cherry began to sing. She would puff up her feathers, and open her bill wide, and fly at him, making a chattering noise ; and poor Cherry would have to stop. Sometimes he would go quite into a corner of the cage and pipe up, but she would stop his notes at once.

Poor Cherry wanted to sing, and at one time he put his head through the wires of the cage where they were bent, so as to make room for him, and began to sing in that position, for he seemed to think he had a right to sing outside of the cage. However, she persecuted him so much, that I had

a sliding partition put in the cage to separate them. One fine day I hung the cage out of the window, and the wind blew the door open on that side of the cage that was occupied by Ruby, and away she flew. I do not know what became of her. I did not feel so sorry as I should have felt if it had been Cherry, and I do not think he felt at all grieved for her loss, for now he had the whole of the large cage to himself, and could sing without molestation. But poor Cherry! a worse fate awaited him than that of his companion. After a while all the seed that had been brought from Florida being gone, I was obliged to feed him with another kind; and for a while he ate of it, but did not seem to relish it much.

“One day as I stood by his cage eating

a piece of cake, I offered him some, which he ate very readily. I kept on feeding him as fast as he would take it, till his throat was so full he had to moisten it with water, before he could take any more. After I had given him all that he would eat, I began to fear I had been imprudent; for he soon got upon a perch, where he sat quietly with his eyes shut, so that I was sure he was sick. I gave him such things as I was told were good for sick birds, but he continued very sick, and I left him at night feeling quite sadly about him. The first thing I did in the morning after leaving my room, was to visit his cage, when sad to tell, there lay poor Cherry, on the floor of his cage, dead!

“This was a great grief to me, and many tears did I shed over my little favourite. I

took him from his cage, and laid him in my lap, and smoothed his bright feathers. I could not bear to tell my mother, or my uncle of my misfortune. After a while I laid him by the side of his cage, and stood—I know not how long—gazing with tearful eyes on my little pet, from whose wing I selected a bright feather, to keep him in remembrance.

“Some years after the event, and in recollection of my feelings at the time of this my first grief, I wrote the following lines.

THE LITTLE GIRL'S LAMENT
OVER HER DEAD BIRD.

He's dead! quite dead! and it is vain
To grieve that he is gone;
I ne'er shall hear his voice again,
Carol its blithesome song.

'Tis vain to grieve that he should die,
Far from the orange bowers,
Far from his bright and native sky,
And from its fragrant flow'rs.

'Tis vain to grieve! 'tis vain to wish,
He had been left to roam,
Amid the spicy vales and groves,
Of his sweet southern home.

But oh that he had ne'er been mine,
Had ne'er been brought to dwell,
In dreary solitude to pine,
Within this weary cell.

Oh my sweet bird! my bright, bright bird!
My first, my only pet;
Thy latest song, thy mournful death,
I never can forget.

No music now can please my ear,
No song I ever heard,

Had half the melody of thine,
My own sweet southern bird.

This feather from thy wing I'll keep,
How dear thou wert to tell,
And oft, at thought of thee, I'll weep,
My dear, dear bird!—FAREWELL.

“But, mother, do all pets die from being tended or fed too much, or from close confinement?” said Lucy, whose heart was much inclined to have some favourite animal to love and call her own.

“Oh no, not always,” said her mother, “though I think *a pet* of any kind is an object of compassion; but there are some that may more properly be made favourites of, such as dogs, cats, poultry, and lambs. These are domestic animals, and naturally attach themselves to those who feed and fondle them.

They are dependant on the care of man, and a dog in particular is very unhappy without a master."

"I wish, mother," said Lucy, "I had one of these animals to love and take care of; it would be such an amusement to me, and they would be happy if I did not shut them up."

"Well, my child," said Mrs. Lane, "you and Willy shall have some ducks and chickens. Will not that be better than to have a bird in a cage?"

"Oh yes, mother," said Lucy, "far better, and then I can find their nests, and bring in the eggs; and sometimes we will have some new-laid eggs for breakfast."

"But, mother, you said a lamb was a proper pet. Oh how I should love a lamb."

"Yes," said her mother, "a lamb is a very

interesting animal. I had a pet lamb when my father lived on a farm: its mother died when it was a young lamb, and as the weather was cold, it was necessary to shelter it and feed it with warm milk, and it grew so tame, that it would walk into the hall if the front door was left open. It never stayed with the flock of sheep, but used to go to the pasture with the cows; and when they were brought to be milked, my cosset would come with them, and we would have a fine play time.

“These gentle and harmless animals are always interesting to me. They were, I suppose, selected on account of their traits as a type of the blessed Saviour, who is called the Lamb of God. It is said of Him, ‘He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he

opened not his mouth.’* Hundreds and thousands of these animals were offered every year by the Jews in sacrifice, showing that ‘without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.’

“On one occasion at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, one hundred and twenty thousand sheep were sacrificed; but these sacrifices were of no benefit to those who did not view them as referring to a Saviour to come, or who did not rely on the atonement he was to make for the pardon of their sins. So also though a full and free atonement has been made by Jesus the Lamb of God, sufficient for the sins of the whole world, only those who repent of their sins, and put their trust in Him can be saved by that sacrifice.”

* Isa. liii. 7.

BIRDS.

BY CHARLES WEST THOMPSON.

I.

YE birds that fly through the fields of air !
What lessons of wisdom and truth ye bear !
Ye would teach our souls from earth to rise,
Ye would bid us its grovelling scenes despise ;
Ye would tell us that all its pursuits are vain,
That pleasure is toil, ambition is pain ;
That its bliss is touch'd with a poisonous
 leaven ;
Ye would teach us to fix our aim in heaven.

II.

Beautiful birds of the azure wing !
Bright creatures that come with the voice of
Spring !

We see you array'd in the hues of the morn,
Yet ye dream not of pride, and ye wist not
of scorn.

Though rainbow splendour around you glows,
Ye vaunt not the beauty which nature be-
stows.

O what a lesson for glory are ye !
How ye preach of the grace of humility !

III.

Swift birds that skim o'er the stormy deep !
Who steadily onward your journey keep,
Who neither for rest nor slumber stay,
But press still forward by night and by day ;

And in your unwearying course yet fly,
Beneath the clear and the clouded sky!—
O may we, without delay, like you,
The path of duty and right pursue!

IV.

Sweet birds, that breathe the spirit of song,
And surround heaven's gate in melodious
throng!

Who rise with the earliest beams of day,
Your morning tribute of thanks to pay!—
You remind us that we alike should raise
The voice of devotion, and song of praise.
There's something about you that points on
high,
Ye beautiful tenants of earth and sky!

SPARE THE BIRDS.

It does one's heart good to find so many persons doing all they can in defence of the poor birds. The barbarous fashion of shooting *sparrows* and *robins* has gone quite out of date with decent men. There are now only a parcel of great, grown-up boys—stout, two-fisted, almost-men kind of boys—who deem it a great thing to carry on this miserable warfare. I saw one, once, coming home after his day's campaign; he was six feet high, with an old rusty firelock on his shoulder, and in his hand, as a trophy, one poor robin. I could not help asking him, Did you kill that bird?

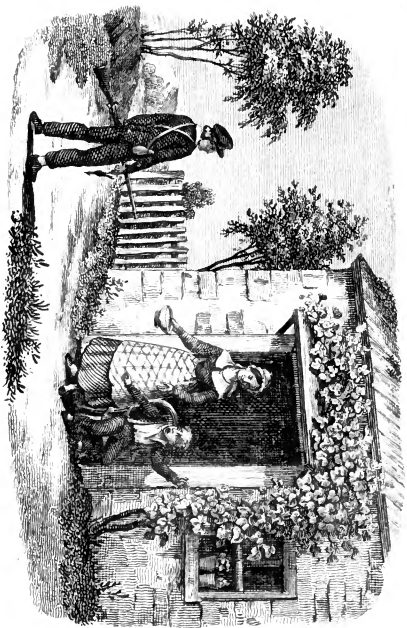
The amusement of shooting birds is pretty much the same as if you were to catch some little wren or tom-tit, and stick pins into it; and let him be the hero, who can first touch the little bird's heart and kill him!

I would not say one word against the humane, and gentle, and kind-hearted sport, if these *gunners* always would kill these birds stone-dead, and thus put them out of suffering at once. It is no sin to kill an animal; but to kill for amusement, to break a bird's wing, to shoot off its legs, tear away a portion of its beak—in sport! And then for the poor creature to starve to death; pine away, dying by inches. Sport! A man with a reasoning mind, a conscience, fine feelings, doing that which a cat does, torturing to death some poor miserable little victim!

A sportsman, now a sportsman no more, told me that he was cured of his folly by shooting a beautiful bird and breaking its wing. "The poor silly thing," said he, "could not escape me, and I picked it up whilst it screamed out in pain; its little heart I felt beating in agony, and its eye looked at me so beseechingly, I had not the nerve to kill it; yet I dared not let it go to starve to death. So, after mustering courage, I shut my eyes and then crushed its head. It made me sick of this kind of sport."

There was another story told me by a clergyman not far distant. "When I was a boy," said he, "like other boys I went a gunning; after a long ramble, I found nothing to shoot at but one poor little jay. This was my only trophy of the day's sport. Feeling

thirsty, I called at a house hard by where I had shot the bird, with my gun on my shoulder, and my game in my hand. When I got up to the door, I saw a poor idiot boy tied to a chair sitting in the doorway. As soon as he saw me, he began to scream and show violent passion. It was shocking. He appeared to be in a great rage. All I could understand was, 'Birdie—birdie—my birdie.' I asked for water. It was given me, in silence, by his mother. I then asked what troubled the boy. She answered, 'You have shot his little bird, one that had been tamed, and that he had fed at the door every day.' This cured me of the sport." Reader, don't shoot the "pet birds." It is not manly, nor humane, nor respectable.



"MY BIRDIE! MY BIRDIE!"

S P A R E T H E B I R D S.

BY REV. G. W. BETHUNE, D. D.

SPARE, spare the gentle bird,
Nor do the warbler wrong,
In the green wood is heard
Its sweet and holy song :
Its song so clear and glad,
Each listener's heart has stirred,
And none, however sad,
But blessed that happy bird.

When at the early day,
The farmer trod the dew,
It met him on the way,
With welcome blithe and true :

So, when at weary eve,
 He homeward wends again,
Full sorely would he grieve
 To miss the well-loved strain.

The mother, who had kept
 Watch o'er her wakeful child,
Smiled when the baby slept,
 Soothed by its wood-notes wild ;
And gladly has she flung
 The casement open free,
As the dear warbler sung
 From out the household tree.

The sick man on his bed
 Forgets his weariness,
And turns his feeble head
 To list its songs, that bless

His spirit, like a stream
Of mercy from on high,
Or music in the dream
That seals the prophet's eye.

O! laugh not at my words,
To warn your childhood's hours;
Cherish the gentle birds,
Cherish the fragile flowers:
For since man was bereft
Of Paradise, in tears,
God these sweet things hath left,
To cheer our eyes and ears.



THE SWALLOW.

THE swallow is a favourite bird, and seems to be known in most parts of the world. Like most of the feathered race, it seeks a warm latitude during the wintry months. In spring it returns to us, and has thus been addressed by a modern English poet :—

“ Welcome, welcome, feathered stranger,
Now the sun bids nature smile ;
Safe arrived, and free from danger,
Welcome to our blooming isle !
Still twitter on my lowly roof,
And hail me at the dawn of day ;
Each morn the recollected proof
Of time that ever flits away.

“Fond of sunshine, fond of shade,
Fond of skies serene and clear,
Ev’n transient storms thy joys invade
In fairest seasons of thy year.
What makes thee seek a milder clime?
Who bids thee shun the wintry gale?
How know’st thou thy departing time?
Hail, wondrous bird! hail, swallow, hail!

“Sure something more to thee is given
Than myriads of the feathered race;
Some gift divine, some spark from heaven,
That guides thy flight from place to place.
Still freely come, still freely go,
And blessings crown thy vigorous wing:
May thy rude flight meet no rude foe,
Delightful messenger of spring!

The provision made by this bird for peculiar circumstances is not a little singular. The following is a case in point. A couple

of swallows built their nest in a stable, and the female laid eggs in the nest, and they were about to be hatched. Some days after, the people around observed the female still sitting on the eggs, but the male flew about, and sometimes settling on a nail, betrayed his uneasiness by a very plaintive note. This led to a nearer examination, when the female in the nest was found to be dead, and her body was thrown away. Singularly enough, the male then went to sit on the eggs, and continued to do so for about two hours, when, perhaps not liking the employment, he gave it up. Still the eggs were not abandoned, for he returned the same afternoon, bringing with him a female, which sat on the nest, hatched the brood, and fed them till they were able to provide for themselves: thus

showing his instinctive solicitude for the young by obtaining care for them superior to his own.

God has made us wiser than the fowls of heaven, but this is often forgotten. How many of the young, for instance, may derive a moral from the following tale. A swallow had unhappily slipped its foot into a slip-knot of packthread, the other end of which was attached to a spout of a public building in France. The strength of the bird was exhausted. It hung at the end of the thread, uttering its cries, and sometimes raising itself as if endeavouring to fly away. All the swallows from places near and remote, to the number of several thousands, flying like a cloud, assembled together, and uttered a cry of pity and alarm.

“After some hesitation, and a tumultuous counsel,” says M. Dupont de Nemours, who observed the whole, “one of them fell upon a device for delivering their companion, communicated it to the rest, and began to put it in execution. Each took his place ; all those who were at hand went in turn, as in the sport of running at the ring, and, in passing, struck the thread with their bills. These efforts, directed to one point, were continued every second, and even more frequently. Half an hour was passed in this kind of labour before the thread was severed, and the captive restored to liberty. But the flock, only a little diminished, remained until night, chattering continually in a tone which no longer betrayed anxiety, and as if making mutual felicitations and recitals of their achievement.”

The food of swallows is winged insects, in catching which they are extremely dexterous. When forgetful of the services of these little creatures, let one fact recall them to our minds. There was a time in which the North American colonists supposed that the purple grakle made sad ravages in their corn, and offered a reward for all that were killed. The result was, the grakles were thinned, but the insects were greatly increased, and the trouble they occasioned was proportionate. So fearfully was the grass damaged, that the colonists had to procure hay from England.

At this crisis, grakles were brought from India to the Isle of Bourbon to destroy the grasshoppers; but when these birds were observed in the fields, it was supposed they

were searching for the newly-sown grain. Again, therefore were they proscribed, and soon not a single grakle remained. Again too the insects increased; the mistaken islanders began to mourn over the loss of the birds, and about eight years after the governor obtained four of them from India, and arrangements were made for their being preserved. To protect them, laws were made, and to check any disposition to eat them, a report was circulated that they were very unwholesome food.

The window swallow is rather less in size than the one we have described. It first makes its appearance in low, warm situations, and, if the weather is fine, begins building early in May. The nest is generally placed under the eave of a house, some-

times against rocks and cliffs contiguous to the sea. How truly may we say with the English poet—

“ Gentle bird ! we find thee here ;
When nature wears her summer vest,
Thou com'st to weave thy simple nest ;
And when the chilling winter lowers,
Again thou seek'st the genial bowers
Of Memphis, or the shores of Nile,
Where sunny hours of verdure smile.”

Marvellous, indeed, is the instinct which, after a voyage of thousands of miles has been performed, and new lands have been visited, prompts the swallow to return to the very eaves that have been left; yet such is unquestionably the fact. The following is one instance, related by an English author.

A sparrow attempted to rob a house-marten of its nest, where lay its young and unfledged brood, and its efforts were watched from time to time by four brothers, who resolved to defend the bird that had found a shelter under their mother's roof. But, alas! the blow-guns they employed loosened the foundations of the mud-walled dwelling—down it came, and its four little inmates lay on the ground. The mother of the children, pitying the condition of the little birds, replaced them in the nest, and set it in the open window of an empty chamber. The fright of the parent-birds was soon gone, and hither they came to feed their young with their accustomed diligence, and to express, in all the ways they could adopt, their satisfaction and confidence. In due time the young birds were fledged,

and from that very window they began to fly. At the season of migration, of course, they were gone; but did they lose all remembrance of the spot from whence they first tried their little wings? Oh no! The very next spring, came four martens, flying familiarly into the chamber, passing from wall to wall, and giving utterance to the joy they felt—the identical brood of the preceding year!

The reference of the inspired Psalmist to the swallow, led to the penning of the following sweet verses by the late Right Hon. Sir R. Grant. May the feelings they express be those of every reader!

“How deep the joy, Almighty Lord,

Thy altars to the heart afford!

With envying eyes I see

The swallows fly to nestle there,
And find within the house of prayer
A bliss denied to me !

“Compelled by day to roam for food
Where scorching suns or tempests rude
Their angry influence fling,
Oh, gladly in that sheltered nest
She smooths, at eve, her ruffled breast,
And folds her weary wing.

“Thrice happy wand’rer ! fain would I,
Like thee, from ruder climates fly,
That seat of rest to share ;
Oppress’d with tumult, sick with wrongs,
How oft my fainting spirit longs
To lay its sorrows there !

“Oh ! ever on that holy ground
The cov’ring cherub Peace is found,
With brooding wings serene ;
And charity’s seraphic glow,

And gleams of glory that foreshow
A higher, brighter scene.

“For even that refuge but bestows
A transient though a sweet repose,
For one short hour allow’d ;—
Then, upwards we shall take our flight
To hail a spring without a blight,
A heaven without a cloud !”



THE WOUNDED BIRD.

SHE sat upon a cedar bough,
Her head beneath her wing,
And swayed in anguish to and fro,
A wounded, dying thing.

Ah hapless bird ! her day of song
And blithesomeness was o'er ;
A wanton youth had stained her breast
And downy plumes, with gore.

Her merry mates were calling her ;
She not a note replied,
But bore her sufferings silently,
And, unrepining, died.

And life, and light, and happiness
Were cluster'd in the wood
Wherein that uncomplaining bird
So perished in her blood.

T. McK.





THE PEACOCK.

THIS beautiful bird was brought into Palestine in the reign of Solomon, from the countries farther to the east and south. That rich and powerful monarch had a taste for natural history, and, at certain times, his fleets returned laden with the most curious and valuable products of distant regions. No wonder, then, that his servants, struck by the elegant shape, the majestic mien, and the splendid plumage of this bird, were anxious to present it to their sovereign; and that we read, "once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

It is probable, that as the pheasant owes her name to the Phasis, a river of Colchis, on the banks of which she first attracted attention, the name of the peacock was derived in the same manner. It is everywhere called by the ancients "the bird of Media," or Persia, in which the land of Cush, or Cuth, was situate, because it came originally from that region.

Aristotle speaks of the bird in terms which indicate that it had become very well known when he wrote. "Some are jealous and vain like the peacock," says he, when speaking of the qualities exhibited by certain animals.

In Greece, and in the Lesser Asia, the peacock was long held in high estimation, and frequently purchased by the affluent at a

very high price. In the age of Pericles, a person made a great fortune at Athens by rearing these birds, and exhibiting them to the public; and many flocked to the sight from the remotest parts of the country. Alexander was so struck, it is said, with astonishment on beholding these birds on the banks of the Indus, and so filled with admiration at their beauty, that he commanded that any person should be severely punished who killed one of them. The voice of the peacock is in strange contrast with its gorgeous array; it is, in fact, a shrill and repulsive scream.

There is generally some drawback to what is thought very beautiful; and the legs of the peacock are often considered unsightly; yet these are, doubtless, best adapted to its circumstances. A singular story is told of one

of these birds, which shows its strength. It was a fine and full-grown one, and was observed on a half-finished haystack in an English meadow. The owner of the stack did not like to have the peacock remain there, and sent up his son, a little boy, to drive him down. In order to accomplish the object, he took hold of the bird's legs, but the bird was not so to be taken, for it forthwith spread out its wings, and flew away, carrying the boy with it to a considerable distance, neither hurt nor frightened.

The peacock, as we have already intimated, is one of the most beautiful of the feathered race. No description of it can give a just idea of its appearance.

The head is surmounted by a tuft of four and twenty upright feathers. In the male,

the tail-coverts consist of feathers of unequal size ; the upper ones shortest, each terminated by numerous eyes or circlets of great brilliancy : these the bird has the power of erecting into a circle or wheel, and this (when the sun shines on it,) presents an object of dazzling splendour, which sets all description at defiance. The female has the tuft, but has not the splendid ornaments with which the male is gifted. Her colours generally are of a soberer cast.

People usually talk of the peacock spreading its tail, but the rich display is composed principally of the tail-coverts. White (a celebrated naturalist) soon saw the distinction. "Having to make a visit to my neighbour's peacocks," he says, "I could not help observing that the trains of those magnificent

birds appear by no means to be their tails, for those long feathers evidently grow all up their backs. A range of short brown stiff feathers, about six inches long, from the real tail, and serve as the prop to support the train, which is long and top-heavy when erected into a circle.

“ When the train is up, nothing appears of the body of the bird, before, but its head and neck : but this would not be the case were those long feathers fixed only in the rump, as may be seen in the turkey cock, when he is in a strutting attitude.”

Colonel Williamson, in his account of peacock-shooting in India, states that he had seen, about the passes in the jungles, surprising numbers of wild peafowls. “ Whole woods were covered with their beautiful plumage,

to which the rising sun imparted additional brilliancy. Small patches of plain among the long grass, most of them cultivated, and with mustard then in bloom, which induced the birds to go thither for food, increased the beauty of the scene. I speak within bounds, when I assert that there could not be less than twelve or fifteen hundred peafowls of various sizes, within sight of the spot where I stood for near an hour."

According to the same authority it is easy to get a shot in a jungle ; but where the birds flocked together, which they often do to the number of forty or fifty, there was greater difficulty.

Then they are not easily put to flight, and run very fast, so fast indeed, that the Colonel doubts "whether a slow spaniel could make

them take wing. They fly heavy and strong, generally within an easy shot. If winged only, they generally escape from their swiftness of foot. They roost on high trees, into which they fly towards dusk."



REMARKABLE DOCILITY OF A BIRD.

A late writer tells the following interesting anecdote concerning the attachment of an Oriole for its mistress, and derived from the lady herself. The statement is altogether in accordance with the well known character of this beautiful and remarkable bird.

This bird, said the lady, I took from the nest when very young, with three others, but being unskilled in taking care of them, this only lived. I taught it to feed from my mouth, and it would often alight on my finger, and strike the end of it with its bill, until I raised it to my mouth, when it would

insert its bill and open my lips by using the upper and lower mandibles as levers, and take out whatever I might have there for it.

In winter, spring, and autumn, I kept a little cage lined with cotton batting for the bird to pass the night in, and, towards evening, it would leave its large cage, and fly to this. After entering, if I did not close up the aperture with cotton, it would do so itself, by pulling the cotton from the sides of the cage, until it had shut up all the openings for the cold to enter. I fed it with sponge cake; and when this became dry and hard, and it wanted some softer, it would make its wants known to me by its look and note; and if I did not very soon attend to it, it would take up a piece of the hard cake, carry it to the saucer of water, and drop it in,

and move it about, until it was sufficiently soft to be eaten.

In very cold weather, the bird would leave the cage, fly to me, run under my cape, and place itself on my neck. Constantly, during the day, when it was at liberty, it would perch on my finger, and draw my needle and thread from me when I was sewing. At such times, if any child approached me, and pulled my cape or dress a little, it would chase the offender, with its wings and tail spread, showing high resentment in its eye, which nothing would allay but the cessation of the offence.

This bird made many journeys with me, and always appeared to be contented and happy could it be near to me, although shut up in a cage six inches long, and eight or ten

inches high and wide, with a green cloth covering, drawn together at the top with a tape, leaving an opening for it to look out and see and receive little crumbs, &c.

In sickness, when I have been confined to my bed, my bird would visit my pillow many times during the day; often creeping under the bed clothes to me. At such times it always appeared distressed and low spirited. When it wanted to bathe it would approach me with a very expressive look, and shake its wings. On my return home from a call or visit, it would invariably show its pleasure by a peculiar sound.

THE SPARROW.

THE sparrow that "sitteth on the house-top," though often talked of, is treated with great indifference; yet there are many things respecting this bird which deserve notice. One pair will sometimes bring up fourteen, or even more, young ones in a season. While thus employed, they will consume about four thousand caterpillars weekly. They likewise feed their brood with butterflies and other winged insects, each of which, if not destroyed in this manner, would be productive of several hundred caterpillars. So bold and persevering, also, are they in providing for themselves and their young, that they will

steal grain from the trough of a pig, or contend with the powerful turkey for its food ; and should they be scared away, it is only for a moment, after which they return in the hope of more plunder. House-sparrows have an appetite more accommodating than that of any other of our birds. In spring, and the early part of summer, they prey on insects ; but when these tribes become scarce, the corn and seeds of various kinds are ready, and on these they feed with equal readiness.

Here is a poet's plea in behalf of this bird ;

“ Touch not the little sparrow, who doth build
His home so near us. He doth follow us
From spot to spot, amidst the turbulent town,
And ne'er deserts us. To all other birds
The woods suffice, the rivers, the sweet fields,
And nature in her aspect mute and fair ;

But he doth herd with man. Blithe servant ! Live,
Feed and grow cheerful ! On my window's ledge
I'll leave thee every morning some fit food,
In payment of thy service. Doth he serve ?
Ay, serves and teaches. His familiar voice,
His look of love, his sure fidelity,
Bids us be gentle with so small a friend ;
And much we learn from acts of gentleness.
Doth he not teach ?—Ay, and doth serve us too,
Who clears our homes from many a noisome thing,
Insect or reptile."

Sparrows make no hasty and careless provision for the future : on the contrary, they build in places where they are likely to be perfectly safe from the plunder of larger birds and vermin. Thus they often rear their nests high in the elm, and beneath that of the rook, a bird of totally different habits,

and with which they do not associate, making use of the structure only for a defence, to which no other bird resorts; and display, by so doing, their ingenuity, as well as their concern for the safety of their broods.

A youth, named Smellie, who in after-life wrote a valuable work, "The Philosophy of Natural History," carried off a nest of young sparrows, about a mile from his place of residence. As he was marching home with his prize, he saw, with some degree of astonishment, both the parents following him at some distance, and silently observing his motions. It then struck him that they might follow him home, and feed the young in their usual way. When just entering the door he held up the nest, and made the young ones utter their usual cry expressive of a desire for food,

and putting the nest and the young in the corner of a wire cage on the outside of a window, he chose a situation in the room where he could perceive all that would happen, without being himself observed. The young birds soon cried again for food; in a short time both parents, having their bills filled with small caterpillars, came to the cage, and, after chattering a little, gave one to each. This parental intercourse continued regularly for some time, till the young ones were completely fledged, and had acquired a considerable degree of strength.

Young Smellie now determined to try an experiment; he took one of the strongest of the young birds, and placed him on the outside of the cage, in order to observe what would take place. All doubt was soon at an

end : for in a few minutes both parents arrived, laden as usual with food ; and no sooner did they behold one of their offspring freed from its cage, than they fluttered about, and showed with their voices as well as their wings, the greatness of their joy. At length, these tumultuous expressions gave place to calm and soothing converse : it seemed that they entreated him to follow them, while he appeared impatient to accede to their wishes, yet afraid to encounter the hazard of a first flight. Again and again he was solicited to make the attempt ; when they endeavoured to show him, by flying from the cage to a neighbouring chimney, how easily it might be done, and at last he committed himself to the air, and alighted in safety, being greeted again by clamorous and active

joy. Next day Smellie placed another young bird on the top of the cage, and in the same way he treated the remainder of the brood; nor did one of them return.

A few years ago, a man went into a public house, and after some conversation with its inmates, stated that he had just had a present of some birds from a gentleman, in whose family he had been at work, and who was about to leave England. Taking one out of a paper bag, he described it as a Virginia nightingale, and as singing most melodiously, while its appearance was not a little attractive. Its head and neck were of a bright vermilion, the back betwixt the wings was blue, the lower part to the tail a bright yellow, the wings red and yellow, and in the tail many colours were blended. He

said it was well worth a guinea to any person, but after much bidding for so great a rarity, he disposed of it at last for five shillings; and as soon as he had got rid of the rest of his birds, he departed. Some time after, a neighbour came in, who soon found out that the party had been duped, and that the Virginia nightingale was only a hedge-sparrow cunningly painted. Often, however, do the fraudulent outwit themselves, and that deservedly. The man who played this trick, in all probability soon resorted to other dishonest means of obtaining money, and found the justice which he now contrived to evade.

Sometimes the increase of sparrows is very great, and the numbers of these visitants to our corn-fields are prodigious. They love

association, but this instinct prepares for the destruction of multitudes. As they roost in troops amidst the ivy on the walls, or ricks, and in similar situations, they are captured by the net; as they cluster on the bush, or crowd by the barn-door for the chaff, they are shot by dozens at a time; or they will rush one after another by numbers into the trap. Various means of destruction are so brought to diminish them during the winter seasons, that their flocks are not remarkably numerous on the return of spring.

It was held, among the many great and awful errors of former days, that the Divine Being having created the universe, left it entirely to itself, and retired as if it were utterly unworthy of his superintendence. And there are many still to be found, who, in like man-

ner, deny the particular providence of God. But let it be remembered, that what it was becoming in the Most High to create, it must be also becoming in him to sustain. Of this we have the most distinct and impressive intimations. Low on the scale of being as the sparrow has been placed, it is, according to the declaration of our Lord himself, the object of divine regard: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Though this bird does not attract our notice by the beauty of its plumage, nor awaken our regard by the amiableness of its disposition, nor command our esteem and gratitude by the benefits it dispenses, yet it is not forgotten before God. "The eyes of

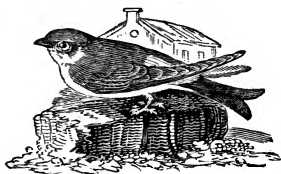
all wait upon thee; thou givest them their meat in due season."

"Some, amidst India's groves of palm,
And spicy forests breathing balm,
Weave soft their pendant nest;
Some deep in western wilds, display
Their fairy form and plumage gay,
In rainbow colours drest.

Others no varied song may pour,
May boast no eagle plume to soar,
No tints of light may wear;
Yet, know, our heavenly Father guides
The least of these, and well provides,
For each, with tenderest care.

Shall he not then thy guardian be?
Will not his aid extend to thee?
Oh! safely may'st thou rest;

Trust in his love, and e'en should pain,
Should sorrow tempt thee to complain,
Know what He wills is best."

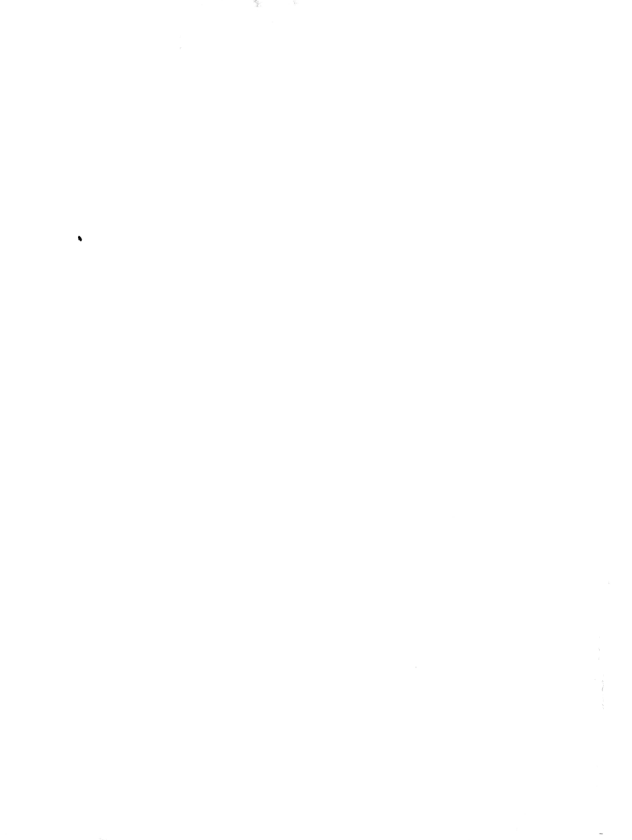


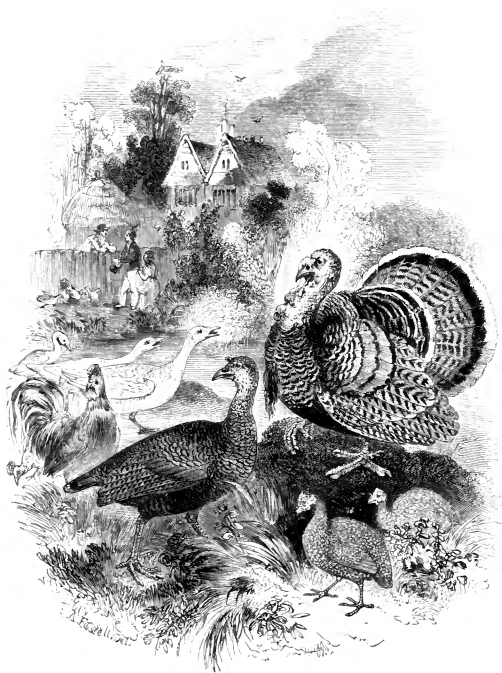
THE SPARROWS AT COLLEGE.

NONE ever shared the social feast,
Or as an inmate or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome,
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,*
Who saw not (and, with some delight
Perhaps, reviewed the novel sight)
How numerous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell,
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which, kindly given, may serve with food

* Sir Isaac Newton studied at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Convenient their unfeathered brood.
And oft, as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious listeners ! to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge ;
A single penny would o'erpay
The expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place ?





THE TURKEY.

A PERSON who has seen the turkey only in the poultry-yards, can have no idea of the splendour of a fine, wild turkey-cock in his full plumage. Then it gleams with the brightest golden bronze, tinged, according to the position, with blue, violet, or green, and beautifully broken by the deep black bands which terminate each feather, and which also have a metallic lustre.

In the reign of George II. of England, a large stock of wild turkeys, consisting of not less than three thousand, were regularly kept in Richmond Park. They were hunted with

dogs, and made to take refuge in a tree, where they were frequently shot by the monarch for amusement!

In a domestic state the turkey subsists on insects and grain. The females, whenever they have opportunity, wander to a considerable distance from the poultry-yards, to construct their nests, and lay and hatch their eggs. When young, they require much attention.

The following are mentioned by naturalists as among the most remarkable habits of the wild turkey:—

The males, who are usually called *Gobblers*, associate in parties of from ten to a hundred, and seek their food apart from the females, who either go about singly with their young, (at that time about two-thirds

grown,) or form troops with other females and their families, sometimes to the number of seventy or eighty. These all avoid the old males, who attack and destroy the young whenever they can, by reiterated blows on the head. But all parties travel in the same direction and on foot, unless the dog of a hunter, or a river in their line of march, compels them to take wing. When about to cross a river, they select the highest eminences, that their flight may be more sure, and in such positions they sometimes stay for a day or more, as if in consultation. The males upon such occasions gobble obstreperously, strutting with extraordinary importance, as if to animate their companions; and the females and young assume much of the pompous air of the males, and spread their tails

as they move silently around. Having mounted at length to the tops of the highest trees, the assembled multitude, at the signal note of their leader, wing their way to the opposite shore. The old and fat birds, contrary to what might be expected, cross without difficulty, even when the river is a mile in width; but the wings of the young and weak frequently fail them before they have completed their passage, when they drop in, and are forced to swim for their lives, which they do easily enough, spreading their tails for a support, closing their wings, stretching out their necks, and striking out quickly and strongly with their feet. All do not succeed in such attempts, and the weaker often perish.

The wild turkeys feed on all sorts of ber-

ries, fruits, grasses, and beetles. Tadpoles, young frogs, and lizards are occasionally found in their crops. The peccan nut is their favourite food, and so is the acorn, on which last they fatten rapidly. About the beginning of October, they gather together in flocks, directing their course to the rich bottom lands, and are then seen in great numbers on the Ohio and Mississippi. This is the *turkey month* of the Indians. The beginning of March is the pairing time, for a short time previous to which the females separate from their mates, and shun them, though the latter pertinaciously follow them gobbling loudly. "Where the turkeys are numerous, the woods from one end to the other, sometimes for hundreds of miles, resound with this remarkable voice of their wooing, utter-

ed responsively from their roosting places. This is continued for about an hour; and on the rising of the sun, they silently descend from their perches, and the males begin to strut for the purpose of winning the admiration of their mates. If the call be given from the ground, the males in the vicinity fly towards the individual, and whether they perceive her or not, erect and spread their tails, throw the head backwards, distend the comb and wattles, strut pompously, and rustle their wings and body feathers, at the same moment ejecting a puff of air from the lungs. Whilst thus occupied, they occasionally halt to look out for the females, and then resume their strutting and puffing, moving with as much rapidity as the nature of their gait will admit. During this ceremonious approach, the

males often encounter each other, and desperate battles ensue, when the conflict is only terminated by the flight or death of the vanquished." Their eggs are usually from nine to fifteen in number, sometimes twenty, whitish and spotted with brown, like those of the domestic bird. The nest consists of a few dried leaves placed on the ground, sometimes on a dry ridge, sometimes in the fallen top of a dead leafy tree, under a thicket of sumach or briars, or by the side of a log.

RETURN OF THE BLUE-BIRD.

SWEET bird of the spring-tide !
Returned to sing and glide
Through the green orchard and o'er the
sweet plain ;
Harbinger of sunshine,
And of the frost's decline,
Welcome thy voice to our sad hearts again ;
Sweet ring thy cheerful notes,
Widely thy song floats,
Joy prompts its melody—joy's in each strain :
Soon will the flowers bloom ;
Soon will the summer come,
And the bland zephyrs blow o'er the green
plain.

Bright is thy graceful form,
After the winter's storm,
Glancing from spray to spray, in the thick
bowers ;
Soft is thine eye of love,
Turned to the clouds above,
Drenching the sunny fields in the spring
showers.

Emblem of happiness,
Where was thy dwelling place
When the cold wintry wind howled o'er the
main ?

Who from southern bowers,
And the sweet orange flowers,
Called thee to visit this cold land again ?

Oh, 'twas the love of home,
Urged thee again to come

Here, where thy nestlings had sported and
grown :

Here was the ancient tree,
Oft seen in dreams by thee,
In the strange southern lands whence thou
hadst flown.

Joy to thee, bird of love,
Here in thy native grove,
Sing through the long summer day to thy
mate ;

Danger is far away,
Safe to *thee* every spray,
Love guards thy tender form : shields thee
from hate !

BIRDS IN SUMMER.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in each leafy tree ;
In the leafy trees, so broad and tall,
Like a green and beautiful palace-hall,
With its airy chambers, light and boon,
That open to sun, and stars, and moon,
That open unto the bright blue sky,
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by.

They have left their nests in the forest bough,
Those homes of delight they need not now ;
And the young and the old they wander out,
And traverse their green world round about :

And hark ! at the top of this leafy hall,
How one to the other they lovingly call ;
“ Come up, come up ! ” they seem to say,
“ Where the topmost twigs in the breezes
 sway ! ”

“ Come up, come up, for the world is fair,
Where the merry leaves dance in the sum-
 mer air ! ”

And the birds below give back the cry,
“ We come, we come, to the branches high ! ”
How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in a leafy tree,
And away through the air what joy to go,
And to look on the green bright earth below.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Skimming about on the breezy sea,

Cresting the billows like silvery foam,
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!
What joy it must be to sail, upborne
By a strong free wing, through the rosy morn,
To meet the young sun face to face,
And pierce like a shaft the boundless space!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Wherever it listeth there to flee;
To go when a joyful fancy calls
Dashing adown 'mong the waterfalls,
Then wheeling about with its mates at play,
Above and below, and among the spray,
Hither and thither, with screams as wild
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child!

What joy it must be, like a living breeze,
To flutter about 'mong the flowering trees;

Lightly to soar, and to see beneath
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,
And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,
That gladden some fairy regions old !
On mountain tops, on the billowy sea,
On the leafy stems of the forest tree,
How pleasant the life of a bird must be !

S T O R Y O F A R O B I N ,

RELATED BY HERSELF, TO A KIND LITTLE GIRL.

You have wished for my history, sweet little miss, and deserve to be gratified. So I will tell it to you. Though it is a sad tale, it will give me pleasure to relate it, if it will please you. My mother early taught me to repay all the kindness I received, and she set me an example of doing so. Besides her music, she gave her labour for the use of a snug little spot in the branches of an apple tree. I overheard the gardener saying that my mother was the best tenant his master had ; for she gave him a song every morning,

and helped him very much in clearing his garden of insects.

In the dear little nest I have mentioned, I was born. You may wonder at the strength of my memory, but I have a distinct recollection of the uneasiness I felt when I was in total darkness, surrounded on all sides by a smooth, hard shell. In my impatience I kept pecking harder and harder, till at length it gave way. My mother soon helped me into liberty, by applying her great beak to the prison walls which confined me. I was a little cold at first, but she covered me carefully with her wings and warm body. My feathers grew very fast, and I was soon warm enough, even when she was away.

I did not often know what it was to be hungry, for my mother brought me a plenty

of the sweetest food she could find. I soon learned to love her very much, and I always tried to please her. If little boys and girls have such a kind mother as I had, I think they are very wicked to disobey them, as I have sometimes seen them do.

When I was nearly large enough to fly, I was terribly frightened. A very great boy climbed up to the nest, and took me in his hand, and gave me to his little sister, who stood on the ground. My mother flew round and round the tree, appearing to be more distressed than I had ever seen her before. This moved the little girl to pity, and she begged her brother to put me back. At first he seemed unwilling to do so, but the kind gardener soon came, and ordered him to re-

turn me instantly, and never to disturb our little home again.

The next spring I was old enough to build a nest, and my dear mate and myself were so afraid of being disturbed, that we made it in a concealed spot in a thicket of bushes, in a retired pasture. At length four little birds made their appearance.

As our little ones increased in size, we were promising ourselves the sweet privilege of teaching them to fly from the nest, and sing among the neighbouring trees. But suddenly our hopes were blasted for ever. Two truant boys were rambling in the fields, within sight of the church spire, where we had heard the bell ring that very morning to invite them to the Sabbath-school.

As they came near, I flew in terror from

the nest, and my agonized mate flew toward it at the same time. Our movements guided them to the spot, and one of them declared that he would have the young birds.

With the acutest anguish we watched the robber, as he carried off the darling objects of our care.

O, how changed was the face of nature around us! The fields and groves no longer seemed pleasant, but desolation and gloom were spread over them. I wish these boys had stopped to consider whether the nest gave as much joy to them as its loss caused grief to us. I hope you will teach all your acquaintances to be kind to the robins, and we will repay them with our sweetest music.

As winter approached, all the robins in the region where we lived flew away to the

South. My mate and myself stayed at the North as long as we dared, in the hope that we should find our lost treasures. When we could wait no longer, we started on our sad journey. Our loneliness seemed doubly distressing, when we saw other robins guiding their happy broods on their first visit.

I did not envy them, kind miss, but their happiness made me more keenly feel my own loss. When we returned in the spring, we found that my old friend, the gardener, had a neat little cottage of his own. "Here is the very place for us to build our nest," said I to my mate, as I alighted upon an inviting spot in a cherry tree, close to his chamber window.

"We succeeded so badly when we tried to conceal our nest," he replied, "that I am

half inclined to take your advice." I then told the story of the good man's kindness, and he agreed that we should be safer near his window than anywhere else.

You can guess how we were employed for several weeks from that time. I will only say that while busied in our pleasant occupation, it was a delight to us both to give our sweetest music to our loving neighbours.

After the young birds were hatched, you would have been delighted to have seen my mate flying around the doors and windows, picking up insects and bringing them to the nest.

But I come now to the saddest day of my life. My mate had gone to the edge of a little pool, where insects were plenty, while I stayed to shelter our little chicks. As he re-

turned with a worm in his mouth, I saw him alight on a fence. A moment after I was startled by a noise like thunder, and looking up again, I saw him fall, bleeding and fluttering, to the ground.

I can never tell this part of my story without stopping awhile to think of my dear mate, who will never join me again in my songs, or my labours.

By the help of the kind gardener and his wife, I reared my young ones. Just before we were ready to take our winter's journey, the same boy who ran with a gun in his hand, and picked up my mate when he fell, passed near the spot where I was resting a moment from my labours, on the branch of a tree. I started instantly to fly away, but I was not quick enough to avoid a heavy stone

which he aimed at me. It struck one of my wings, and almost broke it.

I was still able to fly, though with some pain, and soon started southward with my young brood. I bore the suffering from my wounded wing without complaint, till we arrived in the interior of Pennsylvania. Here I stopped, and my young ones reluctantly left me to take care of myself, while they went forward with the company. For several days I found food in abundance, but when that snow-storm came, I was forced to seek it near your door.

You now have my story, sweet child, and as we are so well acquainted, I hope you will not object to my spending the winter with you; and I will repay your kindness as well as I know how.

TO A ROBIN IN A SNOW STORM.

WHY, pretty robin, why so late,
Prolong thy lingering stay,
Why with thy little whistling note,
Art thou not far away ;
Away beneath some sunny sky
Where winter ne'er is known,
Where flowers, that never seem to die
Down sloping hills are strown ?
Thou shiverest in the bitter gale,
And hast a piteous air ;
And thy loud song doth seem a tale,
Of sorrow and of care.
Say is thy frame with hunger shaken,

Or hast thou lost thy way,
Or art thou sick, and here forsaken,
Despairing dost thou stay ?
Alas, I see thy little wing,
Is broken, and thou canst not fly,
And here, poor, trembling, helpless thing
Thou waitest but to die.
Nay, little flutterer, do not fear,
I'll take thee to my breast,
I'll bear thee home, thy heart I'll cheer,
And thou shalt be at rest.
And oh, when sorrow through my heart,
With bitterness is sent,
May some kind friend relieve the smart,
And give me back content.
And in that sad and gloomy hour,
When the spirit's wing is broken,
And disappointment's wintry shower

Hath left no verdant token,
To bloom with happy hopes of spring,
Then may some angel spirit come,
And bear me on a heavenward wing,
To a sweet and peaceful home.

B I R D S .

BY MRS. JAMES GRAY.

Joyous and happy creatures,
Roamers of earth and air ;
Free children of the woods,
Bright glancers o'er the floods,
Your homes are every where.
Dear are ye, and familiar to the heart,
Making of nature's loveliest things a part.

Ye are upon the mountains,
With proud and lonely flight ;
Ye are upon the heath,
The clear, blue heaven beneath,

Singing in wild delight.
The rock doth shelter you, and many a nest
Amid the ledges by the lake doth rest.

Ye skim the restless ocean,
White plumed, like fairy things :
Ye haunt the inland river,
And the sweeping willows quiver
With the rustle of your wings.
Thro' the dark pines your homeward way
ye take,
Or drop to your lone nests in bush and brake.

To you morn bringeth gladness ;
The first red flush of day
Breaking your rest, appeals
Unto your hearts—unseals
The silent songs that lay,

Like dreams, within you, through the quiet
 night,
And now burst freshly forth to hail the light.

You slumber with the sunset :
 Scarce doth the day wax dim,
Scarce doth the first star glitter,
When from your nests you twitter
 Your happy vesper hymn ;
Like one who, to the woods her lone way
 winging,
Fills the deep night with her impassioned
 singing.

Solemn are woods at midnight,
 When through the heavy shade
Scarcely a moonbeam finds
An entrance where the winds

Stir through each green arcade ;
But dear to you that safest solitude,
Where on your rest no mortal may intrude.

And joyful is your waking
Amid the sighing trees,
In the sweet matin hours,
When smile the opening flowers ;
What want ye more than these ?
Ye seek no praise : your songs as sweetly
sound,
As though a crowd of worshipers stood round.

Ye are the poet's emblem ;
So doth his song gush free ;
So winged and glad his spirit
Doth his high gift inherit,
Pouring its melody

Beneath clear skies, and if they darken, keep-
ing
Song ever in his heart, though it be sleeping.

Sleeping, but not for ever,
Still to new life it springs
When Hope's sweet light doth waken,
And care and fear are shaken,
Like dew-drops, from his wings;
And mid the flowers and trees with sunshine
glistening,
He hath his own reward, though none be
listening.

A LESSON

FROM

THE SONG OF THE BIRDS.

“ Beautiful birds of lightsome wing,
Bright creatures that come with the voice of
spring,
We see you array’d in the hues of the morn ;
Yet ye dream not of pride, and ye wist not
of scorn.
Though rainbow-splendour around you glows.
Ye vaunt not the hues that nature bestows :
Oh ! what a lesson for glory are ye !
How ye preach the grace of humility !



THE TAME SWAN.

THE TAME OR MUTE SWAN is by far the most celebrated for its beauty and the elegance of its motions, which seem as if purposely intended for display. Gliding over the water, with arched neck and the plumes of its wings proudly expanded like sails to catch the breeze, it arrests the attention and courts the admiration of every observer.

In a wild state swans abound in the eastern portions of Europe, and the adjacent parts of Asia, where inland seas, vast lakes, and extensive morasses afford them food and a congenial home. In Siberia, and on the shores of

the Caspian Sea they reside in great multitudes; but, like most of the waterfowl, they are wandering in their habits.

Gentle and inoffensive as it is, the muscular powers of the Swan render it, on the water, a formidable enemy when driven to act on the defensive; and it has been known to give successful combat to animals, and even man, when protecting its young.

A few years ago a very fine swan was drowned in Trentham Pool, (Eng.) the seat of the Marquis of Stafford, by a pike driving at its bill. They were of equal strength, and the bird and the fish both perished.

The Swan makes her nest in the midst of reeds or osiers, near the water, and often on a small island. It is constructed of a mass of twigs or stalks, lined with feathers. The eggs

are six or eight in number. The young birds, (or cygnets as they are termed,) are covered universally with a grayish brown plumage, and do not acquire the white, in its purity, till the beginning of the third year.

Independent of its superior size, the Tame Swan is easily distinguished by its beak, which is chiefly of an orange red. The male measures upwards of five feet, and more than eight in the expanse of its wings. The weight is from twenty to twenty-five pounds, and sometimes more. The Swan is very long-lived, often attaining to more than thirty years of age.

The beautiful down, so much prized when made up into articles of comfort or elegance, is the under-clothing of the whole of the lower surface of the body and the neck. It is thinner

on the back. It cannot be seen when on the living bird, because it is covered by the outer plumage, which consists of large, closely set feathers.

The *song of the dying Swan*, of which we have all heard, is, we need not say, a poetical fable. Perhaps, however, like many other fables, there may be a sort of foundation for it; for the voice of the Swan is low, soft, and murmuring, and when heard from multitudes congregated together, has a very pleasing effect.

Distinguished from the Tame Swan, not indeed in general habits, but in size and several important characteristics, is the WILD SWAN, HOOPER, or WHISTLING SWAN. A native of nearly the whole of the northern hemisphere, this stately bird is migratory,

passing northwards as far as the borders of the arctic circle, to breed, and thence returning southward to winter, being governed by the severity of the season. In our country, the emigrations of the Wild Swan are bounded by Hudson's Bay on the north, and extend southward as far as Louisiana and the Carolinas. In Europe and Asia it extends its visits as far as the warmer latitudes, and some pass into the contiguous districts of Africa, especially Egypt. From this statement we may at once conceive that the present species is very widely distributed.

The Hooper may be regarded as a regular winter visitor to the Orkneys and Western Isles of Scotland. These journeys are performed in flocks of greater or less extent, the numbers being from five to fifty, or more;

they take up their abode on lakes, rivers, or inundated fields, and are shy and wary. On the first opening of spring, they make their way back to their northern breeding-places, scattering themselves over Norway, Iceland, Lapland, Spitzbergen, Kamschatka, Siberia, in the old world, and the high northern lakes of our continent.

The down of the Hooper or Whistling Swan is superior to that of the tame species, and forms a valuable article of traffic. Its voice is harsh and discordant, except when heard from large flocks at a distance, so as to fall blended and softened on the ear. It consists of two notes, like the sound of a clarionet attempted by a learner. The Hooper is much less graceful than the Tame Swan. In swimming it is never seen to throw up the

plumes of the wings, nor assume any striking attitude, but carries the neck erect, at a right angle with the body, instead of in a sweeping and elegant curve.

The flight of the Wild Swan or Hooper is extremely rapid. Some have asserted, that when going with a brisk gale, "they cannot fly at a less rate than a hundred miles in an hour!" and that, to shoot with any chance of success, aim must be taken "ten or twelve feet before their bills;" but when flying across the wind or against it, their progress is slow and the shot easy.

No people rejoice more on the return of the Wild Swan to their dreary realms than the Icelanders. Independently of its being an indication of the advance of spring, these birds supply the natives with down and fea-

thers, which are of great value, not only for domestic comfort, but as an article of barter. The Swan-hunt takes place in the month of August, at which time the old birds are unable to fly, having cast their quill-feathers. The natives then assemble in bodies, and proceed to the morasses and resorts of the Swan, "attended by dogs, and mounted upon small but active horses, trained to pass over bogs, and through marshy soil; the chase then commences, and many are ridden down; but the greater number are caught by the dogs, who always seize the neck, a mode of attack that causes the bird to lose its balance and become an easy prey."

Swans are among the royal birds of England, and are much prized. Each family of swans on the river Thames has its own dis-

trict ; and if its limits are encroached upon by others, a pursuit immediately takes place, and the offenders are driven off. In other cases they live in perfect harmony. The male is very attentive to his mate, and the parent birds take great care of their cygnets. Where the stream is strong, the old swan will sink herself sufficiently low to bring her back on a level with the water, when the young ones will get upon it, and in this manner they are conveyed to the other side of the river, or into stiller water.

THE CHAFFINCH'S NEST AT SEA.

IN Scotland's realm, forlorn and bare,
A history chanced of late—
The history of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct filled ;
They paired, and would have built a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heaths uncovered and the moors,
Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores,
Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding-place they sought,
Till both grew vexed and tired;
At length a ship arriving, brought
The good so long desired.

A ship! Could such a restless thing
Afford them place of rest?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
The homeless birds a nest?

Hush!—silent readers profit most—
This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast,
It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
The tree they call a mast;

And had a hollow with a wheel,
Through which the tackle passed.

Within that cavity, aloft,
Their roofless home they fixed;
Formed with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mixed.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight;
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind:
But goes the male? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No:—soon as from the shore he saw
The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love ;

Then perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along ;
The billows and the blasts defied,
And cheered her with a song.

The seaman, with sincere delight,
His feathered shipmates eyes ;
Scarce less exulting in the sight
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new,

Each some approaching good divines ;
And may his hopes be true !

Hail, birds ! who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine,
In company with man.

Be it your fortune, year by year,
The same resource to prove ;
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love !

THE WREN.

AN English poet, thus addresses this pretty little bird, which, like the redbreast, frequently approaches the dwellings of men, and enlivens the garden with its song the greater part of the year.

“ Why is the cuckoo’s melody preferr’d,
And nightingale’s rich song so fondly prais’d,
In poet’s rhymes ? Is there no other bird
Of nature’s minstrelsy, that oft hath rais’d
One’s heart to ecstasy and mirth so well ?
I judge not how another’s taste is caught ;
With mine are other birds that bear the bell,
Whose song hath crowds of happiest memories brought :

Such the wood-robin singing in the dell,
And little wren, that many a time hath sought
Shelter from showers in huts where I may dwell
In early spring, the tenant of the plain,
Tending my sheep ; and still they come to tell
The happy stories of the past again."

This favourite of one of our shepherd-poets enlivens our fields and gardens with its sprightly note during the greater part of the year. It very commonly builds under the brow of a river's bank, where the turf overhangs, from being undermined by the stream. But the wren seems equally fond of the shelter afforded by ivy on trees or walls, though it will often build under the fork of a bare overhanging bough. A nest was once observed in the small upper spray of a hawthorn, and more commonly still do

they build under the projecting side of a haystack.

A wren, which for many years built her nest behind an ash-tree which overhung the writer's garden, was thus addressed:—

“ Little warbler, long hast thou
Perch'd beneath yon spreading bough,
Sung beneath yon ivied tree—
Thy mossy nest I yearly see,
Safe from all thy peace annoys—
Claws of cats and cruel boys.
We often hear thy *chit-chat* song
Call thy tiny brood along ;
While in her nest, or on a spray,
The throstle charms us with her lay.
Little warbler ! cheerful wren !
Spring-time comes, and *thou* again.
Little warbler ! thou, like me,
Delight'st in home and harmless glee ;

What of peace is to be found
Circles all thy dwelling round ;
Here with love, beneath the shade
Thy tranquil happiness is made :
With thy tiny, faithful mate,
Here meet'st, resign'd, the frowns of fate.
While prouder birds fly high or far,
Or mix them in the strife of war—
Or, restless, through the world will range,
And, restless, still delight in change,
Thou mak'st thy home a place of rest,
Affection, love, and that is best !
Then welcome, welcome, faithful wren !
Thrice welcome to thy home again !”

A strong desire to wash themselves appears in some birds, while others are as much inclined to dust themselves. And for an example of the last, we have the common wren. They do not learn it by imitation.

The old birds dust themselves on the ground, while the young are in the nest and cannot see them. And it is observed that the desire to dust themselves appears equally strong in all, and shows itself as soon as they are capable of the exertion. So also with the washing birds, of which the Wood-Wren is one. The young brood have no opportunity to see the old ones perform this cleansing operation, and yet they seize the first opportunity after they are old enough to feed themselves, to take a thorough washing.

The parental feeling is strong in this little creature.

“The poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
(Her young ones in her nest,) against the owl.”

It appears to be possible for this commonly quiet little bird to become impudent and oppressive. A swallow had placed her nest in the corner of a piazza next a gentleman's house. Another bird occupied the opposite corner; and a wren occupied a little box, made on purpose, which hung in the middle. The birds were all quite tame; but the wren had shown a dislike to its dwelling, though on what account was not known, and at length it determined to drive away the swallows. Singularly enough, it succeeded in its plot; and no sooner was the exploit performed, than, with great dexterity, it removed every material to its own abode. It appeared, too, to enjoy its triumph; its wings were fluttered with great velocity, and great pleasure was perceptible in all its movements.

Meanwhile the swallow sat meekly at a little distance, and never offered the slightest opposition; but no sooner was the plunder carried away, than it went to work with unabated energy, and in a few days repaired the depredations.

We may well applaud the spirit of the swallow, and wish that a temper so inoffensive and meek were more common among reasonable beings. The very example of forbearance in others, disarms passion and violence of half their fury.

THE JACK-DAW.

JACK-DAWS sometimes make their nests in hollow trees, in rabbit-burrows, and in the cavities of cliffs or rocks on the sea-coast. They have been found in great numbers in chalk-pits, and among the large masses of stone rising in the midst of Salisbury Plain, (Eng,) so celebrated for the story of the pious Shepherd.

A great many jack-daws constantly inhabit the higher parts of Windsor Castle, one of the state residences of the royal family of England. Of another position chosen by this

bird, the beautiful poet Cowper reminds us when he says—

“ Above the steeple shines a plate,
Which turns, and turns, to indicate
From which point blows the weather :
Look up, your brain begins to swim ;
'Tis in the clouds, that pleases him—
He chooses it the rather. ”

In some places jack-daws are very fond of chimneys, which are sometimes quite stopped up from the quantity of sticks they collect. A smoky house is considered proverbially a pest ; but such a dwelling these birds do not mind, as they have been known to attempt building in the chimney even where a fire is commonly kept.

The various churches and college build-

ings of Cambridge, in England, supply abundant niches also for their nests; and here they are very numerous. The botanic garden, there, has three of its four sides enclosed by thickly-built parts of the town, and has five churches and five colleges within a short distance; and the jack-daws inhabiting these and similar buildings found that the labels placed near the plants to mark their names, &c., would serve for their nests, instead of twigs from trees; as the former were ready for use, and were also very near home. The consequence was, that they helped themselves freely to these labels: it is said, that from the shaft of one chimney, which was close by the garden, no less than eighteen dozen of these labels were taken out!

The following remarkable story is related

as a matter of fact. Two boys—thoughtlessly and foolishly indeed—went to take a jack-daw's nest from a hole under the belfry window, in the tower of a church. But two things were absolutely impossible: one was to reach it standing within the building, the other to climb to it from without. What was then to be done? They put a plank through the window, as glaziers sometimes do, and while the heavier boy was to sit on one end within the building, and thus to steady it, the other was to go to the opposite end, and from thence to take the wished-for nest. This he succeeded in doing; and immediately he told his companion it contained five young birds, all fledged, when the other answered,

“Then I'll have three.”

“No,” said the younger, “I run all the danger, and I’ll have the three.”

“You sha’nt,” said his comrade. “Promise me three, or I’ll drop you.”

“Do, if you like ; but you shall have only two,” was the fearless reply ; when up went the plank, and down he fell, upwards of a hundred feet, to the ground ! And now the imagination of the reader pictures him stretched out as dead, or at least with limbs all mangled and broken ; but this was not the case. At the moment of his fall, he was holding the birds by their legs : in one hand he had three, and in the other two ; and as they felt they were falling, they naturally fluttered their pinions. The boy too wore, at the time, a carter’s frock, tied round the neck ; which filling with air from beneath, buoyed him up,

and he descended easily to the ground. This he had no sooner reached, than, thinking of the unjust demand of his companion, he looked up and exclaimed, "Now you shall have none!" and ran away, without the slightest injury, to the astonishment of the passers-by, who, with indescribable feelings, had witnessed his most extraordinary descent.

So marvellous a deliverance from imminent peril through the gracious interposition of Providence, may well caution the young reader against a thoughtless choice of associates. The act of the boy within the church was as murderous, in the sight of God, as if he had shot or stabbed his companion. "Enter not into the path of the wicked," says Solomon, "and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from

it, and pass away. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise : but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."



YELLOW-BREASTED RAIL;

OR THE “GOOD MORNING” AMONG THE BIRDS.

THE Yellow-Breasted Rail, though found occasionally in many parts of the United States, and in Canada, is every where rare. It has been met with, apparently as a mere straggler, in the vicinity of New York and Philadelphia, in the depth of winter; and has likewise been seen in Missouri, probably on its spring-passage towards the north. Where it winters, whether in the Southern States, or in still milder climes, is yet unknown.

An old naturalist says, “This elegant bird

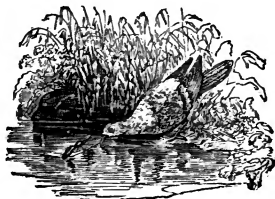
is an inhabitant of the marshes on the coast of Hudson's Bay, near the mouth of Severn River, from the middle of May to the end of September. It never flies above sixty yards at a time, but runs with great rapidity among the long grass near the shores. In the morning and evening it utters a note, which resembles the striking together of a flint and steel; at other times it makes a shrieking noise. It builds no nest, but lays from ten to sixteen white eggs, among the grass.

On one occasion, late in autumn, a yellow-breasted rail was surprised while feeding on insects or seeds, by the margin of a small pool, overgrown with the leaves of the water lily. Without attempting either to fly or swim, it darted nimbly over the floating leaves, and would have readily escaped but

for the arrest of the thoughtless sportsman's gun, which was fatal to its cunning and precaution. When wounded it sometimes swims and dives with great skill.

“On the 6th of October (1831,)” says another, “having spent the night on the borders of a fresh pond, in a lodge, employed for decoying and shooting ducks, I heard, about sunrise, the Yellow-Breasted Rails begin to stir among the reeds that thickly skirted the border of the pond, and in which, among a host of various kinds of Blackbirds, they had for some time roosted every night. As soon as they awoke, they called out in an abrupt and cackling cry, *'krèk, 'krèk, 'krèk, 'krèk, 'kùk 'k'kh*, which note, apparently from the young, was answered by the parent (probably the hen,) in a lower soothing tone.

The whole of these uncouth and guttural notes have no little resemblance to the croaking of the tree-frog, as to sound. This call and answer, uttered every morning, is thus kept up for several minutes in various tones, till the whole family, separated for the night, have met and satisfactorily recognised each other!" It is strange that the instinct of birds should teach them better manners than some very rational families seem to possess.



THE DEAD SPARROW.

TELL me not of joy ! there's none,
Now my little sparrow's gone :

He would chirp and play with me ;
He would hang the wing awhile ;
And until he saw me smile

Oh ! how sullen he would be !

He would catch a crumb, and then,
Sporting let it go again ;

He from my lip
Would moisture sip :

He would from my trencher feed,
Then would hop, and then would run,
And cry, *Philip!* when he'd done !

Oh ! whose heart can choose but bleed ?

Oh how pleasantly he played

Never peevish, nor afraid ;

No morn did pass,

But on my glass

He would sit, and mark and do

What I did. Then ruffle all

His feathers o'er ; then let them fall ;

And then would smoothly sleek them too.

But now my faithful bird is gone ;

Oh ! let the mournful turtles join,

And loving red-breasts too, combine,

To sing their plaintive dirges o'er his stone !



